

POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Risen Christ, Our Hope

'God makes His most beautiful flowers grow amid the most arid stones'
Rome, April 19, 2017. Zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

We meet today in the light of Easter, which we celebrated and continue to celebrate with the Liturgy. In our itinerary of catechesis on Christian hope, today I wish to speak to you of the Risen Christ, our hope, as Saint Paul presents Him in the First Letter to the Corinthians (cf. chapter 15).

The Apostle wishes to settle a problem that surely was at the center of the discussions of the community of Corinth. The Resurrection is the last argument addressed in the letter but, probably, in the order of importance, it is the first: everything in fact rests on this presupposition.

Speaking to his Christians, Paul starts from an incontestable event, which is not the success of a reflection of a wise man, but a fact, a simple fact that intervened in the life of some persons. Christianity is born from here. It is not an ideology; it is not a philosophical system, but a journey of faith that begins from an event, witnessed by Jesus' first disciples. Paul summarizes it thus: Jesus died for our sins, was buried and on the third day He rose and appeared to Peter and to the Twelve (cf. 1 *Corinthians* 15:3-5). This is a fact: He died, was buried, is risen and appeared, namely, Jesus is alive! This is the heart of the Christian message.

Announcing this event, which is the central nucleus of the faith, Paul insists above all on the last element of the paschal mystery, namely, on the fact that Jesus is resurrected. If in fact everything was finished with the death, we would have in Him an example of supreme dedication, but this could not generate our faith. He was a hero. No! He died but is risen because faith is born from the Resurrection. To accept that Christ died and that He died crucified, is not an act of faith; it is a historical fact. Instead, to believe that He is Resurrected, is [an act of faith]. Our faith was born on Easter morning. Paul makes a list of the persons to whom Jesus appeared (cf. cc. 5-7). We have here a little synthesis of all the paschal accounts and of all the people who entered into contact with the Risen One. At the top of the list are Cephas, namely Peter, and the group of the Twelve, then "five hundred brothers" many of whom could again give their testimony, then James is mentioned. The last one of the list – as the least worthy of all – is he, himself. Paul says of himself "as one untimely born" (cf. v. 8).

Paul uses this expression because his personal history is dramatic: he was not an altar boy, but a persecutor of the Church, proud of his convictions; he felt himself as a man who had arrived, with a very limpid idea of what life is about with its duties. However, in this perfect picture — everything was perfect in Paul, he knew everything — in this perfect picture of life, one day something happened that was absolutely unpredictable: the encounter with the Risen Jesus, on the road to Damascus. Not only was he a man who fell to the ground there: he was a person gripped by an event, which would have turned upside down the meaning of life. And the persecutor became an Apostle, why? Because I saw Jesus alive! I have seen Jesus Christ risen! This is the foundation of Paul's faith, as it is of the faith of the other Apostles, of the faith of the Church, of our faith.

How lovely it is to think that Christianity is, essentially, this! It is not so much our search in our relations with God – a search, in truth, so vacillating –, but rather God's search of us in our relations <with Him>. Jesus has seized us, He has gripped us; He has won us, never to leave us again. Christianity is grace, it is surprise, and for this reason it presupposes a heart capable of amazement. A closed heart, a rationalistic heart is incapable of amazement, and cannot understand what Christianity is. Because Christianity is grace, and grace is only perceived and what is more it is found in the astonishment of the encounter.

And then, even if we are sinners — all of us are (sinners) –, if our good resolutions remain on paper, or if, looking at our life, we realize we have added many failures . . . On the morning of Easter we can do as those people that Gospel talks about: to go to Jesus' sepulcher, see the large stone overturned and think that God is bringing about for me, for all of us, an unexpected future. To go to our sepulcher: we all have a little of it inside. To go there, and to see how God is capable of rising from there. There is happiness, joy and life here, where all thought there was sadness, defeat and darkness. God makes his most beautiful flowers grow amid the most arid stones.

To be Christians means not to begin from death, but from God's love for us, who has defeated our severest enemy. God is greater than anything, and only one lit candle is enough to overcome the darkest of nights. Paul cries out, echoing the prophets: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (v. 55). During these days of Easter, let us bear this cry in our heart. And if we were asked the reason for our given smile and our patient sharing, then we can answer that Jesus is still here, that He continues to be alive among us, that Jesus is here, in the Square, with us: alive and risen.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



640 Edrie St. NE, Aiken, SC 29801
803 649-3203

Fr. Emmanuel O. Andinam: Administrator
Joseph A. Dennis: Deacon

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Acts 2:42-47(43A)

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 118:2-4,13-15,22-24

Second Reading:

1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel:

John 20:19-31

Lectionary Readings for Week of 4/23, 2017

Monday: Acts 4:23-31;

John 3:1-8

Tuesday: 1 Peter 5:5b-14;

Mark 16:15-20

Wednesday: Acts 5:17-26;

John 3:16-21

Thursday: Acts 5:27-33;

John 3:31-36

Friday: Acts 5:34-42;

John 6:1-15

Saturday: Acts 6:1-7;

John 6:16-21

Mass Times: Weekdays Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:15 AM,

First Friday Benediction after Mass

Weekend Saturday 4:00 PM, Sunday 7:00 AM and 11:00 AM

Confessions: after weekday Masses and by Appointment

Office Hours: 9:00 AM till 3:00 PM Tuesday - Thursday

Bible Study: Fridays 10:00 AM , **CCD:** No Class at this time

RCIA: No Class at this time

Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Funerals: By Appointment, Contact the office.

Contact Us: Phone 803 649-3203, **E-Mail** stgerardscatholi@atlanticbbn.net

Facebook @stgerardaiken, **Emergency number for Father 803 341-5933**

The Second Sunday of Easter Divine Mercy Sunday April 23, 2017

Mission Statement

Called to be a People for Others

Vision Statement

*Anchored by faith hope and love in Jesus Christ,
we strive to be active disciples, serving each
other and all God's people by welcoming and
embracing the enriching diversity of our community of faith.*

Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving any more but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him: You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe

John 20:26-29



Pray for our sick:
 Judy Riley
 Marge Glauser
 Leonard Saunders
 Shirley Paige
 William and Jackie Cobbs
 Woody Alexander
 Rosa Johnson
 Brenda Lignons
 Joe Fulmer
 Mary Welsh

*"When we live a life of gratitude, being thankful for the gifts we have been given, we really do see that God is providing all that we need".
 (Archbishop Carlson)*



Pastoral Council:
 Marge Glauser,
 Chairperson
 Janet Menefee,
 Vice Chair
 Payson Borst
 Jacqueline Brown
 Fredrick Cadek
 Joan Hesik
 Gregory Wright
 Patricia Hayes
 Matt Fitzpatrick

Volunteer Corner:
Thank you to the counters MJ Erikson and Sandy Arbucket. Thanks to all who helped with Holy Week and Easter Masses. And Jackie Brown and Joan Hesik for preparing the church and sanctuary for Easter. And to all the servers for being available when they were needed

Separated or divorced? You don't want to miss the Journey of Hope Conference for Divorce Recovery coming to Charleston August 4th - 6th at the Charleston Marriott. Great speakers, wonderful food and fellowship. A special Easter Season registration rate will be available starting Easter Sunday April 16th through the 30th. Visit JourneyOfHopeConference.Com for details and to register.

Weekend Offering
April 16, 2017
 Collection \$2,487.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Under \$125.00
 Easter \$1,408.00
 Easter Attendance 195
 Holy Thursday and Good Friday 80
Stewardship a way of life

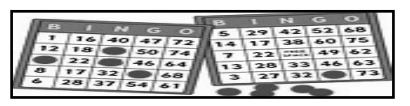
Mass Intentions
 4:00 PM Mass for the Soul of Carmine DeMeo from The Pedleys, 7:00 AM Mass is said for your own personal intentions. 11:00 AM Mass said for Jackie Cobbs birthday from A. Lauer

The Gathering Hymn 80 M
The Day of Resurrection
The Offertory Hymn is 74 M
Ye Sons and Daughters of the Lord
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 511 H
There's A Wideness in God's Mercy
Our Song of Praise is 70 M
Alleluia, Let the Holy Anthem Rise

Finance Council:
 Robert Erikson,
 Chairman
 Leon Gagnon and Anna Marie Key,
 Auditors
 Lisa Solenberger,
 Secretary
 Art Wagner

Family Charitable Outreach:
 Contact Marge Glauser or the office.

BINGO Columbus Club Hall Every Monday at 7:10 PM till 9:00 PM 5 Cards \$ 10.00. Each Additional Card \$2.00
15 Regular Games \$20 Payout
1 Coverall Jackpot \$150 Payout



National Black Catholic Congress XIII
 Registration is still open! The Congress will be held in Orlando, Florida on July 6th-9th, 2017. Father Emmanuel has appointed Wayman and Rosa Johnson to represent St. Gerard at the conference. The Diocese's Ethnic Ministries Office has granted the registration scholarship to The Johnson Family. Thank you for representing us and congratulations.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year the Aiken Knights of Columbus Council #3684 awards scholarship assistance to eligible applicants. Scholarships are based solely on ability and will be awarded based on school grades, standardized test scores, quality of the essay submitted, letters of recommendation, and community or extracurricular involvement. With few exceptions, scholarship assistance will require a minimum grade average of B or 3.00 in high school and 1600 or higher SAT scores (or equivalent). All scholarship applications must be received by April 30, 2017. All scholarships awarded are renewable upon reapplication provided a recipient maintains a B or 3.00 grade average and is a worthy campus citizen. Scholarship interviews may be an integral part of the evaluation. For more information or an application form, call Tom Meisner at (803) 649-4721 or Chuck Goergen at (803) 649-4097.

Hospital Visits: If you or a loved one is in Aiken Regional Hospital (ARMC) please let St Gerards know. Remember - ARMC does not inform us of Catholic patients, even if you register as a Catholic; it is up to the patient or family to do so. You can: ask the ARMC Chaplain to call the Catholic church, ask your nurse to inform the Catholic church (name & room number), call-St.Gerard at 649-3203 and leave a message or email St Gerard at: stgerardscatholi@atlanticbbn.net. You should follow this advice for Nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities also.



Lector: Diane Begic
E E Ministers: Ellen Heim Up Date



Lector: Joan Hesik
E E Ministers: Barbara Dixon

Lay Ministers

Saturday April 29
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
Lector: Diane Begic
E E Ministers: Ellen Heim Up Date

Saturday May 6
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
Lector: Joan Hesik
E E Ministers: Barbara Dixon

Lay Ministers

Sunday April 30
 7:00 AM Mass
Denise Gelinas
Roger Gelinas

Sunday May 7
 7:00 AM Mass
Mary Kay L'Esperance
Gerard L'Esperance

Lay Ministers

Sunday April 30
 11:00 AM Mass
Janet Manefee
Wayman Johnson

Sunday May 7
 11:00 AM Mass
Sheila Wagner
Jackie Brown

Refreshments April 23
 Matt Fitzpatrick/Rosa DiSefano

Refreshments April 30
 Sheila Wagner/Patricia Hayes

Refreshments May 7
 Mike Solenberger/Janet Menefee

The Legion of Mary is meeting at 1:30 on Fridays. Please consider joining. Please Pray the Rosary.

Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Tuesdays at the 8:15 Mass



Second Collection Catholic Home Missions Appeal



The Johnson boys contributed \$20 for the Rice Bowl.

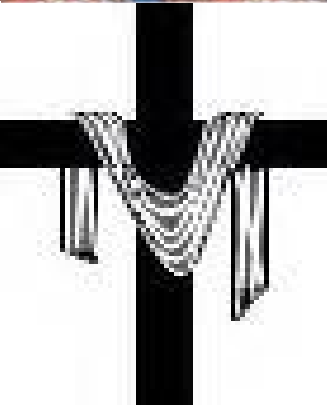
The new ministry and refreshment schedules are posted.

*Please join us for a Cinco de Mayo party!
 Food – Fellowship - Fun - Music – Dancing
 St. Angela Hall and Courtyard (weather permitting)
 Friday, May 5, 2017 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 An authentic all-you-can eat Mexican buffet
 \$10 per person Tickets available at the St Mary Help of Christians Parish Office in Aiken*

Father will be gone 24 April through 16 May. No Daily Masses during that time. Weekend Masses at regular times. Weekday Masses will resume 23 May

No bible study after April 21. We will resume 26 May

Festival Planning Meeting 4:00 PM Tuesday 25 April Council members and interested parishioners please attend.



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

St. Mary's has an ongoing grief support group that meets on Wednesdays. The 13-week program uses Griefshare, a special, lay-led weekly seminar and support group that embraces a biblical, Christ-centered approach to grieving. Please join us for help and encouragement after the death of a loved one. We provide a safe and loving environment to encourage sharing and exchanging of concerns and feelings as you are comfortable. This group is open to anyone in our community, regardless of Church affiliation. Please pass the information along to anyone you know who might need it. People may join the group at any point during the 13 weeks; each session stands alone. The meetings are held downstairs in Smith Hall from 3:30 until 5:00 pm but we join for coffee and fellowship any time after 3:00. The registration fee is \$20 and scholarships are available. Registration information is available at the St. Mary Parish Office. Please contact Bette Ross at 803.649-4777 or bross@stmmarys-aiken.org for additional information or questions.
I will turn their mourning into joy; I will console and gladden them after their sorrows
 — Jeremiah 31:13

If you know of someone that needs The Blessed Sacrament brought to their home or hospital please call the office.

In Harms' Way: Please remember in your prayers our Nation and loved ones of our parishioners currently serving in harms' way: James Lignons and Robert McHugh. Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

BLACK CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 5-7, 2017 MIAMI, FLORIDA

The Bowman Francis Ministry team would like to invite you to the fourteen annual Black Catholic Men's conference in Miami Florida October 5-7. This conference invitation is extended to all males and youth males 10-17 years of age. Come to the conference and be blessed to be the best man- the best youth you can be in the church, community and world. If you have any concerns you can reached me at 317-523-0900 or check out the ministry at bowmanfrancisministry.com

Fr. Chester Smith FOR BROCHURE: Click link below. http://www.bowmanfrancisministry.com/men_s_conference